HELPING YOU HELPS ME:

A GUIDE BOOK FOR SELF-HELP GROUPS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Self-Help and mutual aid grows by leaps and bounds. New groups appear daily across North America, and their membership climbs. Groups begin almost naturally from meetings of people who share a common interest.

This Guide Book is aimed at people who want to start new self-help groups, or who want to improve the way their own group works. It is a practical guide to starting and maintaining a self-help group.

SELF-HELP — WHAT IS IT?

The first section outlines different ideas about self-help, and tells about some different kinds of self-help groups. It also explains why self-help works, and what it can and can't do.

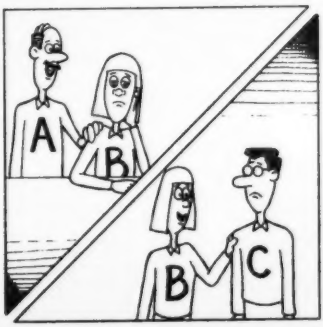
GETTING STARTED

The second section is aimed at people who want to start a self-help group. It outlines some practical ways to find people who share a common interest and lists some methods of beginning a group.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

Section three is for groups which have been going for awhile. It gives detailed ideas for people who want to help the group stay strong and healthy.

The final section is a bibliography on self-help.



SELF HELP — WHAT IS IT?

"Self-help is barn-raising revisited"
Len Borman

Self-help is a way to deal with problems that everyone faces from time to time in their life. Illness, divorce, the death of a loved one, hit the lives of almost all Canadians. As well, many of us face emotional upset or strains caused by changes in our home, our job, our family situation.

Talking these problems over with other people wh have lived through them can help us cope with today's difficulty. It can also help us learn how to deal with tomorrow.

SELF-HELP — FOR HEALTH PROBLEMS

Paul was a smart, personable salesman with a charming wife, two lovely children and many friends. Everyone agreed he was a young man on the way up.

A few months ago, when the dizzy spells began, Paul told himself he was just working too hard. Suddenly, however, he began to lose all feeling in his fingers for several minutes at a time. The dizzy spells increased, he got the "shakes" each morning.

After many tests, the truth had to be faced. Paul was told he had a disease that would make him lose his coordination. He would eventually be unable to leave his bed. There was no cure, he was told. Paul and Chris were numb. They found it difficult to discuss the subject at all, even with family and close friends.

Home life became more difficult for everyone. Paul paid little attention to his work. His children were confused by all the unexplained changes in their lives. One black Sunday, when Paul and Chris

were almost at the end of their rope, a good friend called. She told them about a group formed specifically to help people with disorders like Paul's.

Paul was skeptical about joining "a bunch of losers" but Chris was desperate enough to consider any idea at all. She called the group, and the following week she and Paul went to their first meeting. She talked openly of her fear of the future and learned more about Paul's disease. Chris appeared to benefit right away from the sharing of people in similar situations. But, Paul could not get past his horror at the spectacle of so many people with diseases similar to his own. Many of them were unable to coordinate their movements or speak clearly. He said little and kept his distance.

One week there was a newcomer at the meeting — a boy in his early teens, recently told he had multiple sclerosis. His mother was a working widow with three other children, and her deep fatigue was obvious to everyone.

Just to give the mother a break, Paul started to chat to the boy. To his surprise he found it stimulating and interesting since the boy was something of a math whiz and was intrigued by the financial world Paul knew so much about.

Within a couple of meetings, Paul found himself acting as substitute father to the boy. So preoccupied was he with this new role that it took him some weeks to realize that his own feelings of loss were a little less. He saw that things were going a little better at home. He noticed that he was much more involved in the give-and-take of group meetings.

Paul still needed medical treatment — the group isn't a substitute for that. It won't help change the attitude of people who are put off by the appearance of the disabled. But Paul and Chris found some

of the basic ingredients of self-help groups. It's people who share a common problem. It's people who talk together in order to help themselves and each other. Self-help is really mutual help — by giving of ourselves, we not only help someone else, but we help ourselves as well.

SELF-HELP — FOR ADDICTION

Self-Help groups also deal with problems caused by addictive or compulsive behaviour. Alcoholics Anonymous is probably the best known group in the world that is aimed at people with addiction problems.

Anne found that a few social drinks in the evening helped her relax after a hard day's work. As time went on, she began to have an occasional drink at lunch to "help her cope". Over the years one drink at lunch, and one at night became two, then four at lunch, and unconsciousness at night. Anne knew she had a drinking problem.

After a fall at home, which resulted in a broken wrist, Anne's doctor suggested she call Alcoholics Anonymous. Out of desperation Anne called and was visited by Joan, a woman who had been an A.A. member for several years. Joan and Anne both grew up in small towns and they had a lot in common. Joan took Anne to her first A.A. meeting.

At the meeting, with her buddy Joan "holding her hand", Anne was at first taken aback by the "rules" of the meeting. The extreme honesty of the discussion startled her.

She was surprised by the number of people she saw involved. She was impressed at their level of commitment, and the strong leadership offered the group by long-term members. During coffee, she talked to several people and to her surprise found people from many walks of life — politicians,

beauticians, waiters — all eager to help, and to stay sober.

Anne began to attend meetings regularly and saw that no matter what their background, all members were treated the same. For the first time she felt hope that she would be able to beat her problem.

Though she made progress at staying off the liquor, her nervousness and depression continued to make home life difficult.

Joan suggested that Al-a-teen would help the children understand what their mother was going through. It would also give them the moral support of other teenagers who had similar experiences. She also suggested Al-Anon for Anne's husband.

Anne's physical and mental state improved over time. She learned about alcoholism, and how to stay sober. Her self-image changed and her life began to get better. There came the meeting where she was asked to act as "buddy" to a newcomer. She saw a woman who was weepy, rumpled, who looked anxiously about her as if she couldn't wait to leave. She saw a woman who wondered aloud if she was wasting everyone's time, including her own.

With some amazement, Anne recognized her own "image" just one year ago. She found herself advising the woman just to set herself the goal of getting through the night without a drink . . . then tomorrow morning . . . then tomorrow afternoon . . . to stay sober "one day at a time".

She realised that she believed these words that once sounded so unrealistic and impossible. She knew the system worked.

Anne saw some of the other features of self-help groups — the shared leadership, the importance of the "coffee chats", the way the "buddy" system

works. It worked for Anne, and millions of others who belong to the dozens of self-help groups modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous.

SELF-HELP — FOR LIFE'S CHANGES

Self-help groups also work for people who are going through a change in their lives — widowhood, for example, or divorce.

In their mid-sixties, Francine and Tony were the ideal couple. Financially secure, a sound marriage, lots of things in common — they even went fishing together. But when Tony died in a car accident, Francine was devastated. She was alone for the first time in her life, without Tony to talk to, to eat dinner with, to go on holiday with. Who would decide about selling the house, and what fun would a holiday be without him?

Francine's friends worried about her. She cried a lot, came for dinner but wouldn't stay to visit. She seemed to be cutting herself off from the outside world.

Her daughter suggested that she see a counsellor, and Francine did go a few times. But the counsellor was only thirty, and Francine felt that as a man, he didn't quite understand her problems. The counsellor suggested a self-help

group called "Widow to Widow". With Francine's approval, he introduced her to Audrey, who had been widowed some months before.

Over countless cups of coffee, Audrey listened to Francine talk of the plans she and Tony had made for retirement. Audrey told Francine how she had managed over the first few months that followed her husband's death. The two women got along so well that Francine felt she'd known Audrey for years. She introduced Francine to other widows in the group and Francine very timidly asked them to her home for a pot-luck supper.

Over some months, Francine became good friends with one of the group members, and they planned to take a bus tour of the Atlantic provinces for their holiday. Francine moved away from the group after a while, but she kept in touch with the women who had helped her learn to adjust to a new way of life.

Francine found some other features that mark self-help groups. She noticed that they can add to the services professional people offer. She saw that the support of someone who's lived through a problem can be very helpful. She learned that membership in a group is flexible, and not necessarily permanent.

SELF-HELP — FOR EMPLOYMENT

Jean had taken early retirement, and after a few months, wished he had something to fill his afternoons. His evenings were busy with meetings of Smokers Anonymous. He thought he still had a few good years left in his ability to work, and wondered if some company might hire him to work part-time. He wasn't sure anyone would want a 60 year old. But he talked with some retired friends, and found several who also wanted to work part-

time. Though not all were interested, was there some way those who were interested could help each other?

They talked the idea over for several months, and agreed that they'd help each other write resumés. A member who knew how to type offered to type the resumés in return for advice on how to deal with job interviews. Most of the group hadn't looked for a job for years, and wanted to brush up on the practical skills of job-hunting. As they continued to meet, they practiced being interviewed for jobs, and Jean found his confidence returning.

Jean didn't get the first job he applied for. But he had agreed with the other members of the group that if he didn't get it, he'd pass the details of the job opening on to the entire group. The other members agreed to do the same. The "Seniors Employment Bureau" became very active.

As time went on, some of the members of the group did get jobs. Jean continued to attend group meetings to help new people build up their job search skills and confidence.

Jean took some of the principles of self-help groups that he had learned at Smokers Anonymous, and applied them to the job-search group. He also found that starting a group takes time, a lot of discussion and patience. The ideas of sharing and mutual support and encouragement seemed to work.

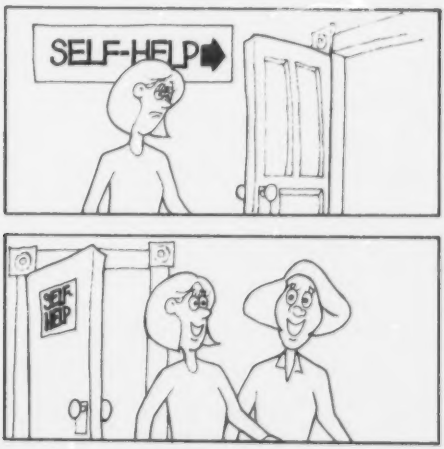
SELF-HELP — IS IT FOR ME?

Self-help groups exist for almost every medical condition, and for most compulsive or addictive behaviours. There are groups for many of the life transitions such as divorce or death our families face. The number of groups and the number of their members

are literally uncountable, but there are thought to be hundreds of groups in Canada, with thousands of members.

Self-help is effective much of the time. But not everyone will be willing to share their feelings as openly as some groups would hope for. And any number of people will still require professional treatment or advice. And, not every group works for all of its members. Self-help won't topple a government, and it's unlikely that the movement will run a candidate in the next election. A self-help group can't cure cancer, or replace psychiatry.

But, self-help is a way to deal with all kinds of problems. It's a method where people are treated as equals. It means a group where openness, informality, friendliness and getting involved are the usual way of doing things. If those qualities sound good, maybe self-help is for you!



SELF-HELP GROUPS: WHERE DO I FIND THEM?

CALL, TO ASK:

- Community Information Centres
- Social Service Agencies
- Health Organizations
- Information and Referral Agencies
- Public Libraries
- Community College/CEGEP
- Existing self-help groups
- Special Interest groups

CLEARINGHOUSES:

Self help/mutual aid clearinghouses are a relatively new phenomenon in Canada. In the United States, they are more numerous and may serve urban centres, regions and even states.

In general, clearinghouses:

- refer individuals to groups;
- maintain an inventory of community groups, often published in a directory;
- provide a consultation service to groups getting started;
- organize fairs; and,
- act as an advocate for self help/mutual aid concerns.

They may also assist groups with public education and media relations, or provide speakers on topics of interest.

As clearinghouses develop, they collect information ranging from fact sheets and pamphlets, to books and audio-visual materials for loan to individuals or groups pursuing new knowledge in a field. They often become a centre where research ideas are not only developed, but carried out.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of a clearinghouse is that it provides the self-help community with a home, a place where groups can interact and learn from others' experiences. Ideally, it becomes a vibrant local centre from which a variety of activities radiate, serving all

kinds of groups. By so doing, it promotes the growth of the self-help movement in general.

List of Self Help/Mutual Aid Clearinghouses

Québec
L'Association de santé mentale de Québec
432, Blvd. St. Cyrille ouest
Québec (Québec) G1S 1S3

Montréal
Camac (Centre Aide Mutuel/Mutual Aid Centre)
P.O. Box 535, Succ. Desjardins
Montréal (Québec) H5B 1B6

Toronto
Metropolitan Toronto Self Help Clearinghouse
246 Bloor St. West (5th Floor)
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1

Winnipeg
Winnipeg Self Help Center
1166 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2W 3S6

Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Self Help Development Unit
410 Cumberland Ave. N.
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 1M6

Calgary
Family Life Education Council of Calgary
223 12th Ave. S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2R 0G9

READ:

- Personal column of the newspaper
- Bulletin Boards in churches, stores, schools, laundromat, etc.

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TALK TO:

- People in your community who usually know what's happening.

OR START YOUR OWN!
Read On

GETTING STARTED
FINDING LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE

To begin, you must find out whether or not anyone else shares your interest or problem. That means you need to define your interest very thoroughly. What is the exact characteristic or situation that you want to do something about? Who else is in that situation? Where can you find them? How should you go about it? After you've found them, what do you want to do?

Defining the Target Population

Some examples of a target population are:

Left-handed people
Single parents
Unemployed people
People who abuse drugs
Senior citizens
People with a handicap
People with the same disease

Groups of people on this list make up communities of interest. They may face a similar problem *(handicap)*. Or they may share a common feeling or outlook *(unemployed people)*. Or they have a particular trait in common *(left-handed)*.

Which of these are you?

Do you face a particular problem? Do you have an outlook on something that you want to share with someone else? Do you have a particular trait? Is the "something" you want to start a self-help group for a combination of these? Be as specific as possible in defining your target population.

After you've defined the characteristic, begin to think about who might share it. Make a list of groups or individuals who might have the same interest or concern, and talk with them about your idea. Talk with other self-help groups and social service organizations to see what groups already exist. Remember that you're trying to define a target group, so not everyone you think of will fit into your interest.

As you're working to define the target population

you will find other people who want to join in. You and your new-found friends will be the organizing group. One of the things that makes a self-help group successful is to share the work-load, so spread the task of talking with individuals and groups around. Get possible members involved in defining the target population, and you'll be well on the road to getting the group started.

As you talk with other self-help and social agencies ask if they would be of help to you as your group starts up. Keep a list of these helpful people, even if they're not part of your target population.

SUMMARY

Your target population is a group of people who face a similar problem; share a common feeling or perception; or who have a particular characteristic in common.

RESOURCES

"Organizing on the Basis of Interest", a publication by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (Ontario) and District, n.d. 9 p.

Eleanor Bowles, Self-Help Groups: Perspectives and Directions — An Instructional Guide for Developing Self-Help Mutual Aid Groups. (Available from the National Self-Help Clearinghouse, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, 10036).

Frances Jemmott Dory, Building Self-Help Groups among Older Persons: A Training Curriculum to Prepare Organizers. (Available from the National Self-Help Clearinghouse, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, 10036).

Alan Gartner and Frank Riessman, Help — A Working Guide to Self-Help Groups, New Viewpoints, New York.

Zelda Harris, "Ten Steps Toward Establishing a Self-Help Group: A Report from Montreal", Canada's Mental Health, Volume 29, Number 1, pp. 16 and 32.

GETTING STARTED — DEFINING THE PURPOSE

Now that you've defined who you are and who shares your interest, you're ready to take the next step toward starting a self-help group. The next step is to agree on the purpose of the group. What is it you expect the group will do? Deciding this is a group activity. All members of the organizing group should be involved in getting the group started.

In the beginning, your members will probably spend a fair bit of time talking about the reason they want to start a group. That's a normal thing to happen. Don't rush to plan ahead. Allow lots of time for people to talk about their interests.

To decide what the self-help group will work toward, your organizing group will need to talk about two things. First is the "what" of your purpose. Second is the "how", that is the activities that will accomplish that purpose. The "what" and the "how" have to fit together. Thinking of them together will help your group to set out hopes that are possible to meet. It will also remind you to plan activities that lead it towards its overall purpose.

DEFINING THE PURPOSE — WHAT

Your group will probably have very general purposes it wants to accomplish *(goals)*. It will also have more specific things it wants to do *(objectives)*. Because not everything can be done at one time, you'll have to choose to do some activities before others *(priorities)*.

Your organizing group will want to spend quite a bit of time deciding on the overall goal for the self-help group. People who have started groups have found that the more clearly they define their goal, the easier it is in the future to recruit members, to get funding, to do public education.

An example of the goal for a self-help group might read:

"To increase the number of social events for left-

handed, blue-eyed lamp-lighters in the City of Lethbridge".

A goal statement is a broad statement of what your group wants to do, or to be.

An example of objectives for this group might read:

"To establish a weekly meeting to plan activities"
"To publish a list of social activities"

Objectives are sub-divisions of goals. They are activities which need to be done to reach the goal.

An example of priorities might be as follows:

First priority, to establish the weekly meeting to plan activities. Second priority, to publish the list of social activities. (This is the second priority because until the activities are planned the list can't be made up.)

Determining goals, objectives and priorities takes some time. Your organizing group may want to spend several sessions to do it. It might be helpful to spend one session putting together a rough list of goals and objectives, and to then go away and think about them for awhile. The next time you get together, you could double-check your goal and objectives statement with the whole group. The group could then talk together about setting priorities.

As you set your priorities, it could be helpful to outline the reasons for your choices. Keep in mind that some objectives may not be possible to accomplish until after others have been done. You may want to set an objective that is easy to accomplish as one of your beginning tasks. Getting a "success" under your belt will encourage the group to keep working.

DEFINING THE PURPOSE — HOW

The next step is to determine the best way to accomplish those priorities, that is, to figure out a strategy.

There are many possible ways to accomplish the priorities of your group. Figuring out the <u>best</u> way to

accomplish your priorities involves discussion and compromise among the members of your group. An effective way to start is by listing all your priorities and then listing all the possible methods the group can think of to accomplish each one. Taking the first idea which comes up is not necessarily the best way.

Think of as many possible plans as group members can come up with, and then choose the best one. The best strategy is chosen according to what the group thinks is to be gained or lost by each choice. Remember that there may not be a perfect method, but there probably is one that the group agrees is better than the others.

SUMMARY

Defining the purpose of your self-help group includes setting goals, objectives, and priorities. It also includes determining the methods you will use to accomplish the priorities. A clear statement of purpose, and a plan to accomplish that purpose will be useful in later activities of the group.

RESOURCES

"What Do You Want Your Group To Be". A publication of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District, n.d. 5 p.

"The A.A. Group — An Informal Handbook on How A Group Functions and How to Get One Started". Published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 1965, 51 p.

"Notes for Community Leaders". A series of publications by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Province of Ontario, 1975.

"Getting People Together". A publication of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Province of Ontario, 1975, 30 p.

E-1

GETTING STARTED — MEMBERSHIP

Who can join the group and who cannot? Your organizing group will probably have given some thought to this as you defined the target population. It's also a good idea to review your ideas before you begin to recruit more members.

Is the group only for people who share the problem or interest? Is it open to their families and friends too?

Are there geographic or age limits?

Are there membership fees?

What is the person required to do to be considered a member — sign a card; make a promise . . .?

Most self-help groups are informal. People come and go as their interests and needs are met. Most self-help groups seem to operate with flexible membership requirements. Many self-help groups appear to use an "open door" principle, which makes it quite simple for people to join and leave the group.

Most self-help organizations only require that the person agree with the purpose of the group. In Alcoholics Anonymous, "the only requirement for membership is a

desire to stop drinking". This fits closely with a purpose of the group which is to "stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety". The limits your group places on membership will mean that you'll have to say "no" to some who want to be members. Your group will probably want to be fairly clear about its reasons for excluding people.

SUMMARY

Reasons for denying people membership should be clear. Self-help groups usually put few requirements for membership. They make it easy for people to join and to leave the group.

RESOURCES

"The A.A. Group — An Informal Handbook on How A Group Functions and How to Get One Started". Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1965, 51 p.

F-1

SELF-HELP AND THE PROFESSIONAL — MUTUAL AID

Professional people such as psychiatrists, lawyers, social workers and doctors are often very helpful to self-help groups. While they do their daily work, they often see people who might benefit from a self-help group.

Professionals can aid in the growth of self-help groups by **referring** their clients to the self-help groups they know about. (Groups might consider informing members of particular professions about self-help activities.)

A professional person can often be helpful in **getting a self-help group organized.** One group started after a doctor introduced several of her patients with the same disease to each other, and assisted in organizing the first few meetings. (Schools of social work and community colleges often have people on their staff who have special knowledge in helping new groups get started.)

Professionals can also aid self-help groups by **telling other professionals** about particular self-help groups. They can also connect various self-help groups which face similar problems or interests.

Another way professionals can aid self-help groups is by **giving special advice** on particular matters. Sometimes problem-solving is much easier with the help of the specially developed knowledge a professional person has. Professionals can also give special lectures, based on their theoretical knowledge. They can act as a facilitator for the group from time to time.

Professionals who work in social agencies may also be able to help the self-help group in **finding material resources.** Meeting space, photocopying, and funding advice are things that some professional people have been able to provide through their employers.

The members of the self-help groups and the professional person will want to be sure that the professional is involved in ways the group agrees with, so

that the idea behind self-help isn't pushed aside. The well-being of the group and of its members should be at the top of the list in the ways the group makes use of the skills and knowledge of professional people.

Members of self-help groups might also remember that their own personal experience — the reason why their group exists — means that they probably understand the issue better than the professional whose knowledge is not first hand.

Members might also keep in mind their ability to help the professional learn more about their special interest, and to help them round out their "book-learning" with some practical knowledge. This is not to say that the work professionals do can always be replaced by a self-help group. Their special knowledge is needed to help many people that self-help groups cannot aid.

People with professional backgrounds sometimes join self-help groups as equal members. They may share the particular concern or interest as other members of the group. In that situation, the person's professional role should be put aside and they should act and be treated like any other member of the group. For example, a lawyer who is newly disabled may join a self-help group whose purpose is to aid people to get used to wheelchair use. His legal background isn't important in that group.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups and professionals can help each other. In working together both need to be sure the interests of the members of the self-help group come first, and that the group as a whole agrees on the task the professional person will carry out.

RESOURCES

Alan Gartner and Frank Riessman, "Professionals in Self-Help Mutual Aid Groups", Help — A Working Guide to Self-Help Groups, New Viewpoints, New York, pp. 168 - 174.

D.H. Sanders, "Patients-75; Professionals-0: The Lodge Program in Community Rehabilitation", in Alfred Katz and Eugene Bender's The Strength In Us: Self-Help Groups In the Modern World, New Viewpoints, New York, 1976.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — OVERVIEW

Self-help groups are like other small gatherings of people in some ways. They share the same sequence of starting, growing, flourishing and fading that social clubs, therapy groups and other groups go through.

However, self-help groups are a little different than a therapy group, or a social action group. Their interests center on the person who needs assistance, not on the person or agency providing a service. Self-help groups are usually less formal than more traditional human service organizations. They also depend a lot on the sharing of personal experiences to aid others. They rely little if at all on book knowledge passed on by an expert who lacks first hand experience with the problem.

Self-help groups also rely on co-operation among members rather than competition. They also encourage actions that help the group and its members rather than on competitive behaviour.

Keeping your group alive, well and active may depend on your being able to figure out where your group is at.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM contains sections that can help your group figure out what the group's problems are, and how to fix them.

H-1

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Like all groups, self-help groups begin, grow, change and eventually fade. Knowing what stage of development your group is at can help your members deal with these changes.

FORMING

In the beginning, a few people will meet and talk over their interests. In the "forming" stage they'll try to find others who share their concerns. They may hold a public meeting or two. The meetings probably won't follow any particular way of behaving in the group. *(See "Inside the Group" for more information on how people act in groups.)* The level of discussion may not be too open at this stage. This is because people have to learn to trust each other before they are completely open about their thoughts and feelings.

NORMING

During the next stage, the "norming" stage, the outreach will continue. Perhaps the group will think about developing relationships with other groups or with professionals or respected lay-people. The routine of meetings will begin to be set. Members will probably begin to take on certain roles. Discussion will probably begin to be more open, and friendships will begin to develop. The purpose of the group will be agreed upon. Activities to carry out that purpose will be developed. Expectations of behaviour will also develop. For example, *"no smoking", "coffee after the meeting", "we don't discuss money problems"*. These expectations might not be said out loud, but will develop anyway.

STORMING

During the third stage, it would be a natural thing for some disagreement to surface. This is called the "storming" stage. People might not like the purpose of the group, or its planned activities, or the expectations. This

kind of disagreement almost always happens. *(See the sections on Problem Identification and Problem Solving.)*

PERFORMING

The group will finally get down to business during the fourth stage. In this "performing" stage the roles of members will be set *(this happens naturally, and without a word being said)*. The expectations for behaviour are set. The purposes and activities have been agreed to, and trust among members will be developing. Discussion will become more open. While disagreements may come up, they'll probably be over minor issues.

CHANGING PURPOSE

Over time, the group may gradually move away from its original purpose. That can be fine, but it can also cause disagreement. An occasional look at whether or not the group is still doing what it was set up for can help avoid problems caused by shifts in purpose. The group may want to rewrite its goals and objectives if the shift is a major one.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups usually operate in co-operative, helpful ways. They're informal, and rely on the experience of members more than on the knowledge of experts.

Self-help groups go through four stages, Forming, Norming, Storming, and Performing. Disagreement occurs, but in the end, the group gets down to business.

H-3

RESOURCES

See Alfred Katz, Parents of Handicapped Children, for discussion of stages of development in self-help groups, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1961.

Alfred Katz, "Self-Help Organizations — Volunteer Participation and Social Welfare", Social Work, Volume 15, Number 1, January 1970, pp. 51-60.

Hedley G. Dimock, Leadership and Group Development (four pamphlets), Sir George Williams University, Montreal, 1970.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — INSIDE THE GROUP

People can learn how to be effective in a self-help group meeting. Adults learn better from equals, than from 'experts'. You can learn from each other about how your group operates.

Groups Act Differently, Depending On

- the particular combination of people who are its members
- the way in which people talk to each other
- the setting where the meetings take place
- the rules for its activities
- the purpose of the group
- the structure

These factors also determine how effective the group is at meeting the needs of its members, and whether or not it achieves what it sets out to do.

GROUP NEEDS

All groups have two kinds of needs that must be met if the group is to stay lively and effective. One need is to get its job done — that is, to work toward its purpose. These *"Task Needs"* are being met when members get the meeting started, help keep it moving, give information, summarize events, check to see if people agree.

A second kind of group need is the *"Maintenance Need"* — that is, things that members do in the group to help it work more effectively. *"Maintenance Needs"* are being met when members compromise, add humour to a meeting, support others who speak, encourage compromise in disagreements.

Self-help groups sometimes pay more attention to Maintenance Needs than to Task Needs. This is because self-help groups are often mainly interested in the social and emotional needs of their members.

Actions that Meet "TASKS NEEDS"	Actions that Meet "MAINTENANCE NEEDS"
BEGINNING/PROPOSING a task and suggesting ideas	**ENCOURAGING — being warm, friendly and responsive**
GIVING/OFFERING facts, ideas, opinions, alternatives	**APPROVING OR ACCEPTING — verbal or non-verbal**
ASKING/LOOKING for facts, opinions and ideas	**HARMONIZING — attempts to reduce tension and work out disagreements**
EXPLAINING/DEFINING the problem, ideas, suggestions, terms	**COMPROMISING — easing tension, admitting error, changing proposals to help the group**
SUMMARIZING	**HELPING — to keep communication channels open, helping others to participate**
OFFERING a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject	**TESTING to see if members are satisfied**
CONSENSUS-TESTING — checking to see if a decision or conclusion is possible	**SENSING and EXPRESSING group feelings and mood**
	SHARING personal feelings with other members, getting others to express their feelings

A third type of need is also seen in self-help groups. The *"self-oriented"* needs that some members display can make it very difficult to meet the group's Task and Maintenance Needs. These *"self-oriented"* needs may come up because the member is not happy with what the group is doing. They might also come up because of some personal problem.

Actions that Meet
"SELF-ORIENTED NEEDS"

Blocking
Not talking
Recognition-seeking
Dominating
Talking too much
Looking bored
Not listening

Most group members will take some of the above actions from time to time. The group will need to find its own balance between Task and Maintenance Actions. It will also need to find ways to let the person who is acting in a "Self-Oriented" way become a more helpful member of the group.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups have three kinds of needs to deal with — Task Needs, Maintenance Needs, and Self-Oriented Needs. Individual members take actions to meet all three of these needs.

RESOURCES

Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

Hedley G. Dimock, Leadership and Group Development (four pamphlets), Sir George Williams University, Montreal, 1970.

J-1

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — LEADERSHIP

One of the aims of self-help groups is to rely on the strengths of each member. This section looks at how each member can take part in leadership activities.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Premiers, presidents, chairmen and team captains are all seen as leaders. Control by a powerful person is an idea that comes to mind when leadership is mentioned. In self-help groups, however, members are seen as equals. Each person has an important contribution to make to other members and to the group as a whole. But groups do need some direction, and someone to not only point the way, but to assist in getting there.

A PROCESS

Leadership is often thought of as an ability that some people have and some people don't. It is, in fact, a process. It is an action, not a fixed quality.

Gaining the confidence of other people, being able to act swiftly and decisively are leadership qualities. However not all people who have these qualities are leaders. *Why?* Because leadership requires the interaction of both the potential leader, and the potential follower.

If the needs of the potential follower aren't met, then he will prevent the leader from carrying out that role. Through leadership, the needs of individual people, as well as the group as a whole must be met.

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Different styles of leadership are effective in different situations. An assertive leader might be required to get a group moving on a problem it doesn't want to face. But, she might be less effective where encouraging compromise is indicated. No single person has all the

leadership skills required for all situations, so it makes good sense to use the skills that various members of the group have.

TO AVOID

Some habits of leadership cause problems in the group.

The Dictator	*"Be reasonable — do it my way"*
The Missionary	*"Argument and conflict never solved anything"*
The Bureaucrat	*"Follow the rules and you'll never go wrong"*
The Deserter	*"If at first you don't succeed, give up"*
The Stone wall	*"If you don't understand it, oppose it"*
The Judge	*"You're wrong"*
The Professor	*"And furthermore, let me say this about that"*

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Leadership can be a responsibility that is shared by the group. Different members can perform different leadership roles according to their own special abilities.

The leadership role can be looked at as a job of facilitating the group to accomplish its purpose. Leadership can be seen as encouraging discussion, action or decision. Many group members will have some skills at facilitation. The person who's particularly able at one skill will probably be willing to carry out that role in the group.

For example, one member of the group may be quite good at summing up the group's discussion. Another member might be skilled at moving the discussion on to a new topic when the group is bogged down in a discussion. A third member might be particularly helpful in bringing out

participation from members who don't usually participate in the discussion. Another member might be skilled at planning a particular project. Still another member might be adept at helping members of the group determine their own skills and what part they might play in a group project. These and other skills are all important to leadership.

The strength of the self-help group can be great when it realizes that no single person needs to possess all of these skills. As well, these skills can be learned as people become more willing to help the group in its activities.

Facilitation Skills

- ***Keeping members on topic.***
- ***Summarizing what members have said.***
- ***Accepting feelings as okay.***
- ***Suggesting ways to solve a problem.***
- ***Summarizing and clarifying direction or decision.***

Because this approach to leadership relies on shared responsibility for the groups, the members may want to share other responsibilities. If the group has formal officers such as chairperson, treasurer, etc., the rotation of these assignments will help people develop their skills and add life to the group.

ANOTHER WAY

The informal style of leadership won't be of interest to all groups. Self-help groups which are involved in very complex tasks, or in social action may find that they need a formal and clearly outlined division of responsibility to accomplish their purpose. Even so, the principle of using the skills and abilities of all members is an important one to keep in mind. Groups which require more information on roles and responsibilities of officers of an organization are referred to the Resource list at the end of this section.

SUMMARY

Leadership is a process that is made up of qualities of individuals, interaction between group members, and various styles of doing things. In self-help groups, facilitating is a leadership skill and style that can strengthen the group. It is a type of leadership than can be shared among group members. More formal styles of leadership may be of more interest to the more formal self-help groups.

RESOURCES

Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

"Leadership", Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (Ontario) n.d.

Alan Gartner and Frank Riessman, Help: A Working Guide to Self-Help Groups, New Viewpoints, New York.

"Guide for Board Organization in Social Agencies", published by Child Welfare League of America, New York.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — INFLUENCE AND TOGETHERNESS

INFLUENCE

The pressure to either change, or to conform is always a factor in the activities of self-help groups. It seems to be a fact of nature that people always try to get someone else in the group to do something — to agree, to listen, to speak. Recognizing attempts to influence will increase your group's understanding of its actions.

The act of influencing is affected by several factors — the direction of the influence attempts, the source of power, the methods used, and the individuals involved.

Direction of Influence Attempts

From outside the group — social service organization wants the self-help group to refer members for service.

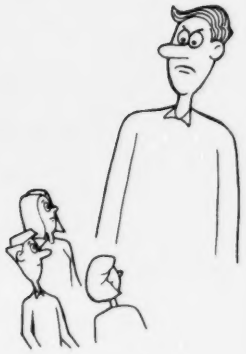
Group toward its members — A.A. expects its members to not drink.

Members toward each other — Bill wants Harry's support for an idea he's promoting.

Member toward group — Joanne wants the meeting night changed.

Group toward its environment — your group wants the medical association to refer new members.

Attempts to influence occur almost all the time. Review the section on Maintaining Momentum — Leadership to understand attempts by one member to influence another. Dealing with influence attempts which come from outside the group may call for another look at the group's purpose. Decisions about trying to influence the environment will depend on how the group has decided to relate to other groups (see section on Community Relations).



The attempt of the group to influence its members is an issue that needs to be decided by the entire group. These influence attempts are most often aimed at getting people to meet the general expectations of the group. They are not usually attempts to get a specific person to behave in a specific way. Expectations for behaviour within the group may need to be clearly stated.

INFLUENCE -- SOURCE OF POWER

In order to be effective at influencing, the individual or group must have some source of power that can be used. Group members sometimes see accomplishments outside the group as a source of power. Some people may be unduly influenced by the opinion of another member who happens to be wealthy or well-educated.

In self-help groups, status as an expert because of long years of experience is a frequently observed source of power. The oldest self-help group, A.A., believes that if long sobriety were to be used as a status symbol, the whole idea of equality among members would be jeopardized. To overcome that possibility, A.A. members often say that *"whoever got up earliest this morning has the most sobriety"*.

INFLUENCE — METHODS

Reward — e.g., praising a statement.

Punishment — e.g., disagreeing with a statement.

Ignoring — can be either punishment or praise, depending on the action involved.

Threatening — to either punish or reward.

Confusing — by an inconsistent combination of the above.

All these behaviours do take place in self-help groups, though they're usually quite low-key. Reward for positive behaviour has proven to be a very effective way of exercising influence.

Attempts to influence can occur through body language as well as through the spoken word.

INFLUENCE — DEGREE OF SUCCESS

What determines the result of an attempt to influence? The importance of the issue at hand is a major factor. Generally, the more important the issue, the stronger the influence attempt will be, and the more likely it is to be successful.

Circumstances are also important. If group members feel threatened they're more likely to successfully resist than if the outside pressure is mild. Group members who know each other very well are more likely to be influenced by an outside group, than if they don't know each other too well. (Because it is likely that little trust will exist among people who are newly acquainted, they're less likely to accept outside influence.)

That also means that groups which are very 'together' can be effective at influencing other groups. The more dominant the person or group is, the more successful they are likely to be. The strength of the method used to influence is important, especially if the person being influenced is resistant. If there's little resistance or argument, the methods matter less.

Another factor in successful attempts to influence is the visibility of the results. If a person is publicly convinced to conform, he'll be less likely to resist than if the influence attempt takes place in private. However, he

is also less likely to continue to conform. That factor could limit his future participation in the group.

TOGETHERNESS

Another factor in how groups keep going is the feeling that people have about being part of the group. The cohesiveness of the group gives members feelings of belonging. It helps people who want to take part in activities. Togetherness adds to members feelings of commitment to the group and other members. They also feel more likely to change their lives in line with the group's expectations.

Cohesion describes how attractive the group is to its members. It is affected by two sets of factors. One is the characteristics of the group, that is, its purpose, its style of operating, etc. The second factor is the characteristics of individual members. The 'togetherness' of your group can be assessed by looking at such things as absenteeism, and at the degree of familiarity between members. You can also look at the amount of supporting, and accepting communication that takes place.

TURN-OVER

Regardless of the degree of 'togetherness', people leave self-help groups, and new members join. For most groups, turn-over is a good way of getting new ideas, and of providing new people for members of long-standing to relate to.

People leave self-help groups because their own needs have been met, or because the need no longer exists, or for any number of other reasons. The informal nature of self-help groups makes it easy for people to leave when they're ready to do so. Turn-over is not a bad thing, unless membership changes so rapidly it disrupts the group's activities.

SUMMARY

All groups will notice attempts of members of other groups to influence behaviour within the group. Recognizing the factors at work can help deal with influence.

The feeling members have about 'togetherness' of the group will affect their involvement. Members do come and go, and that's to be expected.

RESOURCES

Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

Hedley G. Dimock, Group Development: Principles and Techniques for Workers in Group Serving Organizations, Sir George Williams University, Montreal, 1966.

William Shalinsky, "Small Groups in the Planning and Policy Field", Journal of Urban and Environmental Affairs, Volume 9, Number 1, Fall 1977.

John D. Ingalls, A Trainer's Guide To Andragogy, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, May 1973.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE — WHY?

Most groups need some kind of structure to help people feel part of the group, and to help accomplish the group's purpose. Self-help groups are usually quite informal. Your group will probably decide to structure itself as little as possible while still allowing its purposes to be achieved. A Board of Directors and committees may not be necessary for a discussion group. Perhaps the only 'officer' that is required is someone to set the next meeting. Maybe all that is needed is a system of sharing that type of responsibility.

Sometimes the need for structure can be met through a system of rotating responsibilities among various group members. For example, Doris is chairperson for October, and has no formal responsibilities for the rest of the year. John takes over as chairperson for November. A system of rotation also helps get members involved in group activities. It also is a way that members can learn more about working with other people.

Informal groups are often better at meeting the emotional and personal needs of their members. Sometimes loosely organized groups are not too efficient at accomplishing a complex task such as raising large amounts of money. Informal groups sometimes have difficulty in keeping a powerful individual from dominating their activities.

The group will probably want to be able to explain its actions to its members and to the public or the law may require it. *(Check with your provincial registrar. Addresses are listed below).* Even if the law does not require a Board of Directors the group members will want to think of how they will deal with questions that might come up about their activities.

Formally structured groups, with a Board of Directors, and committees are sometimes better at getting complex tasks done. But they may not be as good

at meeting the emotional and personal needs of their members. It seems to be the case that formal structures cause divisions among people. But it also seems to be true that strictly laid out rules is a way to prevent individual people from acting without the group's consent.

Your self-help group will want to consider carefully how much structure you need, and for what reasons. The balance between formal organization and no structure at all will reflect both the purposes of your group, and its self-help nature.

Keep in mind that it is easier to add more structure when the group needs it, than it is to remove it once it has been created.

STRUCTURE — WHAT PAPERWORK?

After your organizing group has decided what kind of structure your self-help group will require, a record of your decision should be kept. Depending on how formally you've decided to organize, the group may want to write a constitution and some by-laws. You may want to apply for status as a charitable organization (this will allow you to issue receipts to donors for their income tax deductions). If you want to go this route, contact the federal government (address below) to obtain instructions and the proper forms to fill out. You may also want to recruit some legal advice to help you get them filled out properly.

Even if you're going to continue to operate informally, it's a good idea to begin keeping some records — just notes of meeting activities, number of members, future plans, etc. Keep in mind the principle of rotating responsibility, and **"KEEP IT SIMPLE"** as you figure out who will take on this task.

SUMMARY

The structure of your self-help group should be as uncomplicated as possible — you need enough formality to satisfy outsiders, and yet not so much that your members are kept from being involved.

If you want to become more formal, some paperwork is required by government.

PROVINCIAL REGISTRARS

For information about incorporation as a non-profit organization, contact the following:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Corporate Registry
Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs
940 Blanshard Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8W 3E6 (604) 387-4471

ALBERTA

Corporate Registry
Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs
10365-97 Street, 8th Floor
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3W7 (403) 427-8080

SASKATCHEWAN

Corporations Branch
Dept. of Consumer and Commercial Affairs
1871 Smith Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7 (306) 787-2970

MANITOBA

Companies and Business Names Registration Branch
405 Broadway Avenue
10th Floor
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3L6 (204) 945-2651

ONTARIO

Companies Branch
Ministry of Consumer and
Commercial Relations
555 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2H6
(416) 963-0380/963-0391

NEW BRUNSWICK

Department of Justice
Consumer and Corporate
Affairs Branch
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton,
New Brunswick
E3B 5H1
(506) 453-2963/453-2682

NOVA SCOTIA

Department of the
Attorney General
Registrar of Joint Stock
Companies
1660 Hollis Street,
1st Floor
P.O. Box 1529
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2Y4 (902) 424-7743

YUKON TERRITORY

Societies Clerk
Department of Justice
Govt. of the
Yukon Territory
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6 (403) 667-5314

QUEBEC

L'Inspecteur général des
institutions financières
et des entreprises
800, Place D'Youville
Québec (Québec)
G1R 4Y5 (418) 643-5253

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Corporations Division
Department of Justice
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7N8 (902) 892-5411

NEWFOUNDLAND

Registry of Deeds,
Companies and
Securities
Department of Justice
P.O. Box 4750
Confederation Building
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5T7 (709) 576-3315

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Registrar of Societies
Legal Registry
Department of Justice
Govt. of the
Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9 (403) 873-7490

FEDERAL CHARITABLE STATUS

For more information about obtaining tax exempt status as a charitable organization, contact:

Department of National Revenue-Taxation
Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations Section
400 Cumberland Street, Room 610
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0L8 (613) 954-0410

M-1

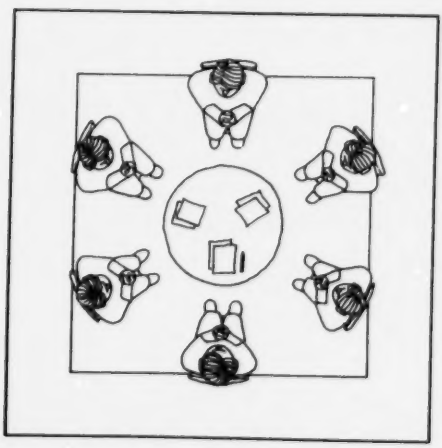
MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — KEEPING PEOPLE INVOLVED

THE SETTING

The effectiveness of any group depends partly on how people feel about being members of the group. It also depends how they feel about taking part in its activities. This 'climate' will vary from one type of group to another, and from one meeting of the same group to another. One meeting may be warm, informal and exciting, while the next is stuffy, formal and dull. Those kinds of feelings will affect what members get out of meetings. It will also affect how actively they take part, and whether or not they continue to be members.

Physical surroundings are important to the 'climate' of a meeting. If people are comfortable, they are more likely to pay attention, and to be involved in group activities. Attention to details such as room temperature, comfortable chairs, and quiet surroundings can make a lot of difference in how people feel about a meeting.

Seating arrangements are another detail of physical surroundings. Chairs should be arranged so that every member can see every other member. Arranging chairs in a circle will make it most likely that all members will talk and listen to each other.



Helping people to talk to each other is a second aspect of 'climate'. Greeting members at the door, and providing name tags can begin to help people to put aside thoughts of their activities before this meeting. It will also make it easier for them to start conversations with each other. A bit of time spent in informal discussion will also help get members into the activities of your particular meeting. This will also reduce anxiety they might be feeling about coming to the meeting. It can also help to get them used to interacting as group members rather than as individuals.

Posters, advertising methods, meeting notices, and agendas all tell members something about the group. These kinds of things also contribute to the 'climate' of the meeting. For example, if your group advertises itself as being a place for informal discussion, but presents an agenda divided into ten minute time slots, members will get a mixed message about the group. This confusion between promise and practice can cause frustration among members. It might also limit their participation.

Another aspect of 'climate-setting' is the behaviour of the group's facilitator or leader. A person who is cheerful, informal and enthusiastic and acts in an open and democratic manner will encourage other group members to act that way. A facilitator who acts in a controlling, closed and undemocratic way may generate difficult behaviour among other members of the group.

M-3

A CLIMATE SETTING CHECKLIST

Physical Surroundings	Human and Interpersonal Relations	Organizational
Space	*Welcoming*	*Poster, Displays*
Lighting	*Comfort Setting*	*Policy*
Acoustics/ Outside Noise	*Informality*	*Structure*
Decor	*Warm-up Exercise*	*Clientele*
Temperature	*Democratic Leadership*	*Policy and Structure Committee*
Ventilation	*Interpersonal Relations*	*Meeting Announcements*
Seating: Comfort/ Position	*Handling VIP's*	*Informational Literature*
Seating Arrangements/ Grouping/ Mobility/Rest/ Change	*Mutual Planning*	*Program Theme*
	Assessing Needs	*Advertising*
	Formulating Objectives	*Exhibits*
Refreshments	*Designing and Implementing Activities*	*Budget and Finance*
Writing Materials	*Evaluating*	*Publish Agenda and Closing Time*
Ash Trays	*Closing Exercise*	*Frequency of Scheduling Meetings*
Rest Rooms	*Close on Time (Option to Stay)*	
Audiovisual Aids		
Coat Racks		
Parking		
Traffic Directions		
Name Tags or Cards		
Records/ Addresses, etc.		

SIZE

Discussion is greatly affected by the number of people in the group. The best size is between six and ten people — less than that doesn't provide enough different experiences. But, if there are too many more, not everyone will have a chance to take part. If your group has a large membership, you could break into smaller groups for discussion, and then get back together for any activities the whole group must be involved in.

SUMMARY

The climate of your group meetings will have a big effect on how the group does its work. The physical surroundings, the interaction between people, and the organizational setting and the size of the group all affect 'climate'.

RESOURCES

John D. Ingalls, A Trainer's Guide to Andragogy, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, May 1973.

N-1

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — COMMUNICATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

People share their thoughts and feelings in a group both by talking and through body-language. Non-verbal messages are communicated by body language. The following section outlines some factors that encourage improved communication among your group's members.

Two special factors in communication appear to be vital in making self-help groups work. One factor is that all group members are accepted as equals in dealing with the issue at hand. Within the group, each person has their own unique experience, and their own way of dealing with the issue. A person with a university degree is not necessarily better at handling his or her problem than a person with less education. Members of the group have equal status within the group. Communication within the group will be better if one member doesn't defer to another on the grounds that Francine is a lawyer, or that Jim is wealthy.

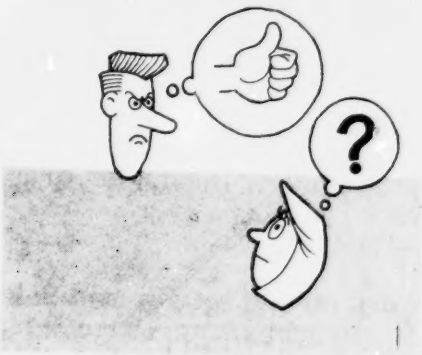
A second special communication factor that makes self-help groups effective is the contact between old and new members of the group. The person who has had long experience at successfully dealing with the issue can reassure the newcomer that the problem can be managed. He can also give some pointers about how he did it. Sharing these experiences also reminds the old-timers of the reason they originally joined the group. Most importantly, this kind of sharing helps people feel good about themselves and about the group.

Some groups have 'Buddy' systems so that there's a special way of encouraging communication between old-timers and newcomers. *(See "Sponsorship" in Resource section.)* Groups can also make a point of introducing newcomers to old-timers during the social part of meetings.

HOW YOU SAY IT IS WHAT YOU SAY

Have you noticed a person in your group who frowns throughout the meeting, but says nothing? Did you

get a feeling that that person was unhappy? Without opening his mouth, that person communicated a very clear message to you. And, if he replies positively to a question on how he felt about the meeting, you would probably feel somewhat puzzled.



When people speak one message, and give another through body language, people respond to the non-verbal behaviour, not to the spoken word. Generally, group members are better able to share their own feelings, to accept the feelings of others, and even to come to agreement on issues if they are tuned into body language.

Things to look for in assessing communication amongst members include the following:

- *Who speaks to whom?*
- *How often?*
- *Does everyone speak?*
- *Is their 'Body Language' consistent with their spoken words?*
- *Does everyone listen to all speakers?*
- *Do certain speakers dominate the meeting?*

CONFIDENTIALITY

Self-help groups often deal with very personal issues, and with emotions. Many people hesitate to talk too personally in a group for fear other members will talk

to outsiders about what's been said in group meetings. Deciding how much of the group's discussion is to be kept within the group and what can be talked about outside group meetings is a very important factor in communication. People will share what they want to, and tell as much of their feelings as they feel safe in doing. A strictly-observed rule about the confidentiality of group conversation will encourage people to be more open in group meetings than they would be otherwise. Some groups use first names only to help deal with the 'confidentiality' issue.

WHAT TO DO?

Communication problems affect the entire group, and so they are an issue for the group as a whole to deal with. Using the problem identification and problem solution sections could be helpful.

Some groups have developed a code of communication behaviour which can help limit some problems. The Integrity Groups, which are for recovering mental patients, adopt the following rules:

Members agree they won't:

- ***Interrupt***
- ***Blame***
- ***'Act-out' negative emotion***
- ***'Sub-group'***
- ***'Yes . . . but'***
- ***Talk back or argue***

- ***Mind read, or expect others to do so***
- ***Cheat (on agreements)***
- ***Double-talk, lie***
- ***Tit-for-tat***

Your group might decide that it wants to improve its ability to assess and deal with communication issues. This will help the group function more effectively, and help members learn more about communication. If you do, the Biagi book listed in the Resource section can be used as a workbook that your group can use on its own to improve communication skills. Schools of Social Work usually have faculty who could also assist.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups rely on two special factors of communication. One is the fact that all members are treated as equals. A second is that contact between old and new members is vital. 'Body Language' is an important factor in all communication. Confidentiality of discussion within the group is important.

RESOURCES

Alan Gartner and Frank Riessman, Help — A Working Guide to Self-Help Groups, New Viewpoints, New York.

Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

John D. Ingalls, A Trainer's Guide to Andragogy, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, May 1973.

Julian Fast, Body Language, M. Evans & Co., New York.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Self-help groups do run into trouble. Some difficulties are the kind that are impossible to ignore, such as a disagreement between members. Less obvious problems can be more difficult to identify. Being able to figure out what's wrong will help your group to keep going strong.

Dealing with issues in a group is a group activity. The group will be stronger and more effective if all members take part in figuring out the problem, and in solving it.

PERCEPTION

How you look at an issue has a big effect on the way you try to deal with it. The way you look at an issue also determines how successful you are. For example, if something has been identified as causing disagreement among group members, that event can be labelled an 'issue', or a 'conflict'. The word 'conflict' brings to mind thoughts of anger and unpleasantness, and that can make other group members uneasy. It may also bring to mind the idea of winners and losers.

On the other hand, calling a disagreement an 'issue' keeps the event in a more positive light. This will help set the stage for a solution in which all members,

and the group as a whole, benefit. It could result in a situation where there are no losers.

Self-help groups rely very much on the cooperation and sharing of their members. So problem-solving in a win-win framework is a way to help keep group members active and involved.

ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS — I

Reasons for difficulties in self-help groups:

- ***the purposes of the group are met, or that the purposes are no longer important to the members.***
- ***sub-groups are fighting over goals, or over means of reaching the goals, or over power over the group.***
- ***personalities of individual members clash.***
- ***pressures from outside the group are causing problems (a lack of support from an important organization; too few resources).***
- ***the group is too assertive in its activities.***
- ***the members are unsure about the group's purpose, or about its effectiveness.***

Two of these problems are more destructive to self-help groups than the others. If the group operates in ways that the greater community doesn't like, the group will have difficulty. Also, if the members of the group and their particular difficulty are not accepted and tolerated by the community, the group will have problems. *(See the section Community Relations for more information.)*

ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS — II

Another way to evaluate the operation of your group is to compare it to 'successful' self-help groups.

The following list outlines some of the criteria for a successful group:

Some Conditions for Effective Self-Help Groups

- ***Groups that are constantly EXPANDING, thus allowing for the older members to model and play the helper role.***
- ***Groups that DEVELOP many LEADERS and helpers with considerable shared leadership.***
- ***Groups that PROVIDE many PAY-OFFS or extra gains, such as media attention, etc.***
- ***Groups that have DEVELOPED strong IDEOLOGIES or missions, whether a social ideology or the A.A. type.***
- ***Groups that have RESOURCES — meeting place, newsletter, funds.***
- ***Groups that have developed strong group TRADITIONS.***
- ***Groups that have developed varied ACTIVITIES.***
- ***Groups that have developed a strong background of KNOWLEDGE based on the EXPERIENCE of members.***

ASSESSING GROUP MEETINGS

A look at the activities that take place at the group's meetings can help identify problem areas. The following are things that usually indicate a contented and effective group meeting.

EFFECTIVE GROUP MEETINGS

- *The atmosphere is friendly, cooperative, and pleasant with new members easily fitted into the discussion/activities.*
- *All members eagerly participate.*
- *The purpose of each task or topic is defined and kept in mind.*
- *Everyone communicates, not just a few.*
- *Everyone contributes and there is no fighting for status or hidden agendas.*
- *The group uses the abilities of all members rather than relying on a few.*
- *The members stay with the task and produce effectively.*
- *The group adjusts to changing needs and situations.*
- *The members feel safe in speaking out; neither ideas nor people are ridiculed or belittled.*
- *Interest is generally high.*
- *The meeting runs smoothly, without interruptions or blocking.*
- *Incidents that block interaction are dealt with rapidly, sensitively.*
- *Members all seem well-informed and up-to-date. They understand what is going on at all times.*
- *Leadership is shared.*
- *'Self-Oriented' needs are dealt with sensitively.*
- *Decision-making, if required, is carried out in a consensus-building manner.*

After you have gone through these lists, you should be able to make a clear statement of the problem your group is facing. Being able to state the issue clearly will make it easier to deal with the problem.

Identifying a problem can sometimes be easier if an outsider helps. If your group is having trouble figuring out what's wrong, you may want to ask a person who has lots of experience with working with groups to help you out.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups have some special kinds of problems. Especially important ones are how the community accepts stigmatized members, and how the community accepts the group's ways of operating. Self-help groups also have the potential for problems all small groups face. This includes the ways people interact in the group. It also includes the effects those interactions have on the group's purpose and activity.

RESOURCES

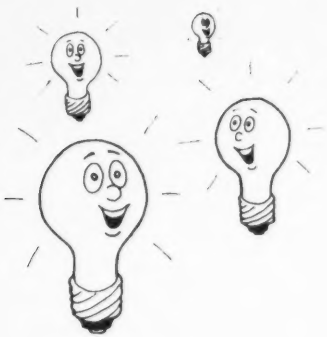
Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

Hedley G. Dimock, Leadership and Group Development (four pamphlets), Sir George Williams University, Montreal, 1970.

Alfred Katz and Eugene Bender, The Strength In Us — Self-Help Groups In the Modern World, New Viewpoints, New York, pp. 117 - 120.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — PROBLEM-SOLVING

Dealing with difficulties in a self-help group can be similar to problem-solving in a family. Both are groups of people who work and relax together. Members share common concerns, and have each other's well-being as an important goal. Both probably are more interested in compromising a bit and staying together than they are in winning, but breaking up the group. The previous section on Perceptions of Problem-Identification sets the stage for dealing with issues in a win-win setting. More effective solutions and more feelings of togetherness will result if the problem-solving process is open and creative, and if all members take part.



STAGES OF PROBLEM-SOLVING

1) IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES — Review the previous section on problem identification.

2) DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS — Once the issue has been defined, groups often turn to the nearest solution. The easiest solution isn't always the best one. Sometimes totally new solutions come from a process called "Brainstorming". In "Brainstorming" all members of the group throw out whatever ideas come to mind during a few minutes time, without judging, discussing or editing. From this list, the group can choose several that seem to be most likely to solve the issue.

Another way to develop alternative ideas is to try to see the solution in a different way.

Questions to Trigger New Solutions

- ***Can the solution be COPIED from somewhere else?***
- ***How can this solution be MODIFIED? Is there a 'New Twist'?***
- ***Can it be EXPANDED?***
- ***Can it be REDUCED?***
- ***What else could be SUBSTITUTED? (Someone else, somewhere else)***
- ***Can the solution be REARRANGED?***
- ***Can the solution be REVERSED? (Roles, or negative aspects seen as positive)***
- ***Can the solutions be COMBINED?***

Another way to develop alternative solutions is to reframe the issue, that is, to try to see it from a different perspective. For example,

ORIGINAL ISSUE: How can we keep Marc from being hostile toward other group members?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION: Tell him he can't come to group meetings.

REFRAMED ISSUE: How can we encourage supportive actions within the group?

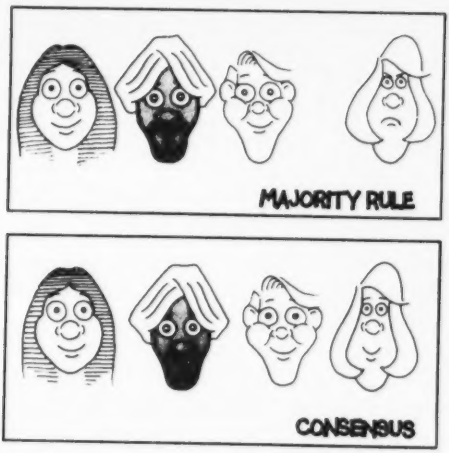
POSSIBLE SOLUTION: Develop ability of members to act as facilitators.

Being creative can give your group new solutions to old problems. It can also add new life and interest to the group.

3) CHOOSING THE BEST SOLUTION — The best solution is the one that's best for both the issue, and for the group as a whole. The idea of keeping group

members involved is again important. The group will also be strengthened if there is widespread if not unanimous agreement on the solution chosen.

Traditionally, group decisions are made by a 'majority rules' process. This kind of decision-making is governed by formal rules such as Robert's Rules of Order. This type of process has some disadvantages for self-help groups. First, if the 'majority rules', it means that only a little more than half of the group members can control what happens. It also means that a little less than half could feel like losers. The fewer people who have that feeling will help the group be stronger. Another limitation is that it gives an advantage to the chairperson, because he controls the 'majority rules' acceptance of motions, who speaks, and voting. It also gives an advantage to people who know Robert's Rules and how they work.



These formal rules are useful in some settings. They do ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly manner. They also allow decisions to be made even when there are conflicting interests in the group. Your group may find that parliamentary procedure is the decision-making process that you're most comfortable with. If so, see the Resource section for some publications that provide more information.

Consensus — Decision-making by consensus is a method that is closer to the ideals of most self-help groups. By coming to a solution that has wide-spread agreement, fewer people have reasons to feel like losers. Consensus is a cooperative effort to find a workable solution that is acceptable to everyone. It is not a competition where the losers are forced to live with a solution they don't agree to. Members can feel their ideas will be accepted. They will know that a valuable solution won't be discarded because someone else knows the rules better than they do.

How does it work? First the group develops through discussion a possible solution to which all agree. They begin with discussion of the alternative solutions which they have developed through a process of elimination. Then they narrow down the list of possible solutions. As the apparent best solution is identified, the facilitator asks if there is opposition to the proposal. If there is none, the solution can be adopted.

Groups vary in how much consensus they insist on. Some groups will not adopt a solution if there is any opposition. Others will adjust to minor objections *(see "Objecting Without Blocking" for some way to do this).* If full consensus is the group's goal and there is an objection that blocks a decision, it must be worked out. The group may agree to take no action on the issue if the objections can't be dealt with to the satisfaction of all members.

Objecting to a Proposal Without Blocking Consensus

COMPROMISE: ***"I don't agree, but I can live with it."***

NON-SUPPORT: ***"I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along."***

RESERVATIONS: ***"I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it."***

STANDING ASIDE: ***"I personally can't do this, but I won't block others from doing it."***

WITHDRAWING FROM THE GROUP

Consensus building takes time, and groups will need to allow enough meeting time to carry out the process. This time spent will probably payoff in good-will, better decisions, and increased involvement.

4) ACTING ON THE GROUP'S DECISION — When you put your decision into action you'll begin to see results. This stage too should be a planned one, and one which involves your members. Using the guide posts "What", "Who", "When", and "How" will be helpful in putting your decision to work.

- ***WHAT:*** ***clearly outlines the action to be taken.***
- ***WHO:*** ***get volunteers, or ask the group to assign specific people to do specific tasks.***
- ***WHEN:*** ***set time lines so that the people who agree to carry out the decision know when the group expects it to be finished.***
- ***HOW:*** ***give some guidelines about ways in which the task should be carried out.***

5) REVIEWING THE RESULTS — Your process will be complete when the group looks again at the original issue, and decides whether or not the action taken solved the problem. It's not unusual to find that a bit more work needs to be done.

Using the process outlined here can be part of the on-going planning of the group. By asking questions such as "Did we do what we set out to do?" the group can keep itself on the track toward meeting its original goals. Or, if the group finds that it is moving in a somewhat

different direction, this process will help clarify what that new direction is.

SUMMARY

Problem-solving in self-help groups will strengthen the group if it is a planned and open process that many members take part in. It consists of problem identification, developing alternative solutions, choosing the best solution, acting on the decision and reviewing the results. Consensus building is a relevant method of problem-solving. The problem-solving process can also be used to plan the development of the group.

RESOURCES

Bob Biagi, Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively, University of Massachusetts (Citizen Involvement Training Project), Amherst, 1978.

Ralph Brody, "Generating Ideas Through Creative Thinking", Problem Solving: Concepts and Methods for Community Organizations, Human Science Press, New York, 1982.

O. Garfield Jones, Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, Appleton-Century, New York, 1949.

Spreed Leas, "A Lay Person's Guide to Conflict Management", The Alban Institute, St. Alban, Washington, D.C., 1979.

General Henry M. Robert, Robert's Rules of Order, Scott, Foresman, Chicago, 1943.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — RECRUITMENT

The members of your organizing group found each other by reaching out, by asking questions, by talking with individuals and groups. Adding to your membership can be done in a very similar way. Go back to the lists you made in the section on "Getting Started". Which groups or individuals were willing to help your group get started? What can they do now to get the word out that your group is about ready to begin?

One to one conversations can be effective in making people more aware of your group. So can using community resources such as neighbourhood newspapers. Using television and radio can also help.

Recruitment Methods

- ***Notices on bulletin boards in stores, laundromats, schools.***
- ***Notices, articles or paid advertisements in neighbourhood newspapers.***
- ***Public service announcements on television or radio.***
- ***Announcements at other public meetings.***
- ***Notices circulated to community organizations, social agencies, churches, etc.***
- ***Telephone chains (each member of the organizing group call five people, explain the group, and ask those five to call five more people).***
- ***Notices in the constituency newsletter of your elected representatives.***

The method your group chooses to recruit people should be geared to the number of people you think you can deal with. Taking out a full page ad in the city's

largest newspaper might bring you more members than you want.

Preparation of a press release will make it more likely your notice will be used in any of the media. A press release is a written statement which says "WHO-WHAT-WHY-WHEN-WHERE". It includes the name and address of the group (use that of one of the members after you've received their approval). It includes the name and phone number of a contact person who can answer questions the media might have. Put the most important parts of your message first in the body of the press release. *(See Sample Press Release).*

SUMMARY

Recruitment methods are affected by your definition of who is eligible for membership in your group (see section on Membership). A press release will help get your notice used.

RESOURCES

"Publicity and Public Relations — Notes for Community Leaders", published by the Sports and Recreation Bureau of the (Ontario) Ministry of Culture and Recreation, n.d., 20 p.

Nancy Brigham, with Ann Raszmann and Dick Cluster, "How to Do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers". Canadian Labour Congress, Ottawa 1983.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
(or release date)

Friends of the UNtall (F.U.N.)

Randy Newman will provide entertainment for a meeting of the Friends of the UNtall (F.U.N.), Ottawa Chapter, to be held Thursday, March 31, at 560 South Street at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Newman, noted satirist, will sing following a business meeting of the organization. Planning for 1984 is the main topic of the business meeting.

Tickets for Mr. Newman's performance will be available at the door for $10.00 or from any F.U.N. member.

F.U.N. is a self-help organization whose aim is to promote social activities for short people.

Contact: Jane Smithers, 731-1367
9:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Jean-Marc Savoie, 829-1326
after 5:00 p.m.

– 30 —

R-1

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — GROWTH

Attracting new members to your group is a sign of success, but what happens when you have more people than can meet effectively at one time?

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

If your group meetings take the form of small group discussion, you'll probably find that having more than eight or ten people in one group limits participation. If your meetings take the form of lecture followed by discussion, you'll be able to deal with larger numbers of people. Depending on where your meetings take place, you may be able to accommodate quite a few small groups. Even so, there may come a time that another group will start meeting at a separate time or place.

This may require a more complicated communication structure than your group has had so far. For public relations reasons you will want to be assured that you operate in compatible, if not similar ways. You will also want to be sure that your groups meet for the same purpose.

Whether or not the groups are identical is a factor that will need to be worked out. The areas in which they agree or disagree need to be clearly outlined. This is so that current and potential members have a similar understanding and reasonable expectations of the groups.

WHAT TO DO?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a group that has dealt very effectively with the issue of growth. At last count there were over 40,000 A.A. groups worldwide, with millions of members. According to the written history of A.A., the mushrooming of A.A. groups called for some kind of structure so that the original principles of the group would be maintained. The challenge was to develop a structure that kept A.A. independent, focussed

on its main purpose and maintain similarity among groups.

A.A. resolved the issue by developing a set of principles for their operation. All A.A. groups are expected to follow them. Many self-help groups have adapted these principles to their own purposes.

"The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous"

1. ***Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.***
2. ***For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.***
3. ***The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.***
4. ***Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.***
5. ***Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.***
6. ***An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.***
7. ***Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.***
8. ***Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our***

service centers may employ special workers.

9. ***A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.***
10. ***Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.***
11. ***Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.***
12. ***Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.***

These principles may help your group deal with the issue of growth.

SUMMARY

Growth is an issue successful self-help groups can deal with by adding more structure and formality to their communications with other similar groups.

RESOURCES

"The A.A. Group — An Informal Handbook on How A Group Functions and How to Get One Started". Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1965, 51 p.

"The Twelve Traditions Illustrated", Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1979, unpaginated.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING

All groups need resources of one kind or another to survive. At the very least, you need space to meet in, chairs, access to a telephone, and coffee. Perhaps you also want postage money, stationery, and a slide projector. Or maybe you're looking for an 'expert' in communication to help deal with an issue in the group. All of these can cost your group money, but they don't have to.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

The first step in getting what you need is to determine very carefully what the needs are. The problem-identification process outlined earlier can help.

Your group might have decided it needs to improve its communication skills. That kind of statement isn't specific enough to base a fund-raising strategy on. You'll need to outline in detail just what is needed. *(Refer to the section "Getting Started — Defining the Purpose" for a review of setting objectives).* This 'Shopping List' will help you figure out where to look for money and for things that can be donated.

Shopping List — Improving Communication Skills

	Cash Value
Expert Trainer	***$200***
Meeting Space	***25***
Coffee	***10***
Public Relations Notice	
— writing	***100***
— typing	***25***
— postage	***30***
	$390

Your first instinct may be to put a dollar value on all this, and set out to raise that amount. Don't do it. There are other ways to meet these needs. As a self-help

group, you're in a good position to take advantage of them.

WHAT HELP CAN YOU GET

There are things your group can use — people and their skills; supplies and equipment; money. Talk to your group. Some people will know where to look or who to ask. A college may have an expert to train people. The volunteer bureau might send over a typist. The church may have a room you can meet in. Maybe the grocery store will give you coffee. Will an ad agency write your press release? Maybe they will teach some of your group how to write the next one. Now you only need $30.00 for stamps. Can each member give a little money?

Look at the sources who traditionally give money such as foundations and governments. Also look at ways you can raise the money yourself. The following are ways your group can work together and generate small amounts of money.

Fund-Raising Ideas

Bingo	***Raffle***
Block Party	***Dance***
Bazaar	***Walking Tour***
Book Sale	***Theater Benefit***
Food Festival	***Celebrity Auction***

As your members plan and co-operate together to develop resources, you'll probably find that you know each other better. Perhaps you'll become even more able to discuss sensitive topics in your group meetings. The group will also benefit because it will become more independent than before.

Major Fund-Raising Campaigns

Raising large amounts of money is a skill. It can be taught, and it takes practice. Specific details of how to raise money can be found in the Fisher and Young publications listed in the resource section.

As background for more specific information, your group could consider the following:

1. FUND-RAISING IS A SALES EFFORT — identify your product and look carefully at how you'll sell it to the public. There are three kinds of products that self-help groups could market: **Personal Benefits —** *"I overcame my gambling problem"*; **Community Benefits —** *"By working together as equals, our Seniors Employment Bank found jobs for 500 senior citizens"*; **Dreams —** *"We hope to turn the old railway station into an historic site."*

   Know your market — who are you trying to sell your product to? And know your product.

2. *RESEARCH, PLAN AND THEN RESEARCH AND PLAN — you are more likely to be successful if you carefully investigate the potential market, and if you make a detailed plan.*

   When you've begun to determine who you will aim your fund-raising at, find out about them.

   a) *What do they (an individual or an organization) do?*

   b) *How many staff; what size budget; have they donated before, and if so for what purposes?*

   c) *Then find out who knows who — who do you know that is most likely to get your product considered?*

   Put this together into a plan which includes information as detailed as who will contact whom and when. Then expand your base. Get more people involved in the fund-raising.

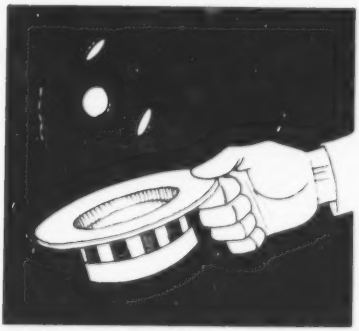
3. WHO CAN SELL — fund-raising is a skill, and it can be learned. Flanagan says people with the following abilities or characteristics usually can be successful fund-raisers:

   - ***a passion for the cause***
   - ***a sense of humour***
   - ***patience and persistence***
   - ***enjoyment in working with others***
   - ***appreciation of others — saying thanks***

4. RAISE THE MONEY — put your plan into action. Evaluate your success along the way, and adjust your methods or target if major flaws develop.

5. REPORT THE RESULTS — the completion of the fund-raising campaign can be used as a public relations event. It can also serve as a great reason to give your fund-raising people a notice of appreciation.

Your group must be able to account to donors, members and probably to government for money raised and how it is spent. Keep records accordingly.



Resource Development for Self-Help groups is a 'people centred' event, like all your other activities. Joan Flanagan suggests the following to make sure people stay at the forefront of your interests while you're raising money.

The Seven People Rules for Fund-Raising Success

1. ***People give to people. Ask in person.***
2. ***The best people you can ask for money are people who already have given money. Keep complete records of your donors.***
3. ***People cannot respond unless you tell them what you want. Always ask for a specific amount or item. Be enthusiastic, optimistic, and bold. You get what you ask for!***
4. ***People who ask for money become better givers. People who give money become better askers.***

5. *People want to back a winner. Be proud of your organization, what you do, and how you do it. Success breeds success.*
6. *More people means more money and more fun. Find a job for every volunteer. Make it more fun to be on the inside and participating than on the outside and looking in.*
7. *People want recognition. Send thank you notes!*

SUMMARY

There are four kinds of resources — People, skills, material and equipment, and money. Money isn't the absolute or best answer to all resource needs. Group members working together to raise money or find other resources carry out self-help principles by co-operating and sharing. They help build a better group. Remember, people first.

S-6

RESOURCES

Saul D. Alinsky, Manuel de l'Animation Sociale: Une action directe non violente, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1976.

J.M. Aubrey, Yves St. Arnaud, La Dynamique des Groupes: Initiation à son esprit et quelques-unes de ses Techniques. Éditions de l'Homme, Montréal, 1964.

André Beauchamp, Roger Gravelin, Claude Quiviger, Comment Animer un Groupe Montréal, Éditions de l'Homme, Montréal, 1975.

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canadian Directory to Foundations and Granting Agencies, 5th ed., Toronto, 1982.

Department of the Secretary of State, A directory of federal funding sources available to citizens organizations, Ottawa, 1982.

John Fisher, How to Manage A Non-Profit Organization, Management and Fund-Raising Centre, Toronto, 1978.

Joan Flanagan, The Grass Roots Fund-Raising Book, Contemporary Books, Chicago, 1982.

Daniel Fournier, Bernard Vallée, Méthodes d'Action Communautaire: Recueil de textes, Centre populaire de documentation, Montréal, 1987.

P. Hamel, J.S. Léonard, R. Mayer, Les Mobilisations Populaires Urbaines, Éditions Nouvelle Optique, Montréal, 1983.

Health and Welfare Canada, "Reference Manual: National Welfare Grants" 1977, Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa. Available from National Welfare Grants Directorate, Health and Welfare Canada, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa.

Henri Lamoureux, Robert Mayer, Jean Panet-Raymond, L'Intervention Communautaire, Éditions Albert St. Martin, Montréal, 1984.

Jean Panet-Raymond, Faut-il Brûler les Pancartes, Association Canadienne d'Économie Familiale (ACEF), Montréal, 1984.

Joyce Young, Fund-Raising for Non-Profit Groups: How To Get Money From Corporations, Foundations and Governments, International Self-Counsel Press, Vancouver, 1981.

T-1

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM — COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Maintaining cordial relations with other groups and organizations is sometimes a challenge for self-help groups. In some instances, professional associations may publicly criticize a self-help group apparently because the group has no 'expert' involved. In other cases, a social service agency may be reluctant to refer its clients and potential group members. Why might these things happen?

SELF-HELP — A THREAT?

Katz and Bender list two primary reasons why self-help groups fail — first is because the group openly and assertively disagrees with community values. An example of this might be a health-oriented self-help group which criticizes professional disease-care services. Another example is a group which demands recognition and acceptance because of, rather than, in spite of their difference.

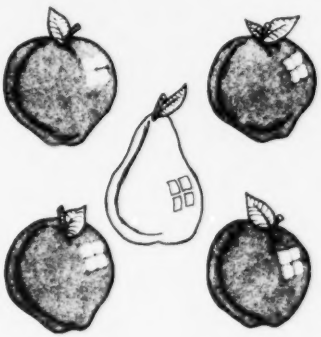
SELF-HELP — FOR THOSE PEOPLE?

A second reason for difficulties in community acceptance is seen when the issue the group focusses on is too unacceptable to society. In the past, for example, a self-help group of illegitimate children might have found severe pressure from its community, because illegitimacy was so highly disapproved of.

WHAT TO DO?

For the group whose existence or activity is perceived as a threat, as in the first example, recognition of the cause of the difficulty is a good start. If developing good relations is important to your group, you might emphasize the group's interest in rounding out the services available for your members. You might place less public attention on the inadequacies of other organizations.

The group whose members face stigma from the community might take a different approach. Your public relations could emphasize the group's interest in increasing the competence of individuals to become fully-participating members of the community. You could focus on the fact that while your members might be 'different' from others, they are not 'deviant'.



This is not to suggest that your group change its purpose or its activities. It is a suggestion about a shift in public relations.

SUMMARY

Some self-help groups may face difficulty in relating to outside organizations. These problems may arise from two factors. One is that the outside group feels threatened by the self-help group's activities. A second is that the community is reluctant to tolerate the group's members because they're seen as 'deviant'. A shift in emphasis, not in purpose and activity, may help overcome these difficulties.

RESOURCES

Alfred Katz and Eugene Bender, The Strength In us: Self-Help Groups In The Modern World, New Viewpoints, New York, 1976.

SOCIAL ACTION — A NOTE

Self-help groups usually centre their activities on improving the ability of their members to deal with issues of personal change. Some aim at speaking out for an individual or a family. Others try to change an organization, the community in which they live, or the policies of governments. *(For example, some of the organizations of the disabled who lobbied for inclusion of their rights in the Canadian Constitution were self-help groups).*

'Social Action' is too large a topic to be effectively dealt with here. The Resource section lists several sources your group may find helpful. And, as your group considers Social Action activities, the following thoughts might be useful.

Social Action done by self-help groups can be very **effective**. Your members can talk about their problems from experience. Decision-makers are strongly affected by that personal touch.

Social Action is sometimes **necessary** to bring about change. A self-help group may decide that it would rather work on improving the 'system' than on helping individuals live within it.

Or, the group may want to focus on **changing** social conditions, rather than try to change their indidivual members.

Or on the other hand, Social Action is a **complex** task. Doing research, developing a lobby, following through may require a more complex organizational structure than your group wants to adopt. For example, if you were to find that you'd need a Research Committee, a Lobbying Committee and a Public Education Committee to carry out your planned Advocacy activity, is the group willing to take on the formality which that structure would require?

A second consideration is that social action activities might add to any **threat** that outside

organizations are feeling. Is your group willing to risk increasing any reservations the Community might have?

Finally, taking on social action activities may **limit** your group's attractiveness to potential new members. People who want to improve their own ability to deal with a personal problem may not be inclined to work on behalf of a larger cause, at least until they deal with their own problem first.

SUMMARY

Self-help groups can be very effective in social action activities. Social action also causes potential problems for self-help groups. They may want to focus on social action, in addition to personal improvement. Increasing complexity and formality might be a problem. Raising the possibility of community rejection is another possible difficulty. Decreased attractiveness to potential members is another possible limitation.

RESOURCES

Greg Speeter, Power: A Repossession Manual — Issues and Strategies for Community Organizing, Citizen Involvement Training Project, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1979.

Lobbying for People, Metropolitan Toronto Association for the Mentally Retarded, Toronto, n.d., 99 p.

Saul D. Alinsky, Rules for Radicals, Random House, New York, 1971.

The O.M. Collective, The Organizers Manual, Bantam Books, New York, 1971.

The Canadian Council on Social Development

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Founded in 1920, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is a national non-governmental, non-profit organization. Through independent research, policy analysis, community consultation and information sharing, the CCSD provides a forum for citizen participation in the formulation of enlightened social policies.

The CCSD is the only national organization whose mandate and involvement embrace all aspects of social development and social policy. Since its beginning, the Council has been actively involved in the evaluation of existing programs, the identification of essential improvements, and the promotion of needed developments. It has been a positive, non-partisan advocate of social measures such as universal inoculation, pensions, unemployment assistance, workmen's compensation, medicare, legal aid, daycare, and social and cooperative housing. The Council played an active role in the development of the Canada Assistance Plan and the Child Tax Credit, and has been a promoter of the Guaranteed Annual Income concept.

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The CCSD is a major publisher in the field of social development. Publications include research reports and policy briefs, a bi-monthly, bilingual magazine of social comment and analysis and three quarterly newsletters (see overleaf for more details).

National headquarters of the Canadian Council on Social Development are located at 55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4G1. Our Montréal office is located at 515 av. Viger est, Suite 410, Montréal (Québec) H2L 2P2.

The Canadian Council on Social Development

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1986 150 pp $10.95

Community-Based Health and Social Services

One of the major challenges facing health care and social service providers today is how to design and deliver services or programs that are socially and culturally viable, as well as responsive to changing community needs. **Community-Based Health and Social Services** outlines the central issues and themes which arose during a November 1985 national conference on "Improving the Delivery of Community-Based Health and Social Services." Included in the report are practical discussions of the common objectives of such services, the diversity and range of services available, benefits and pitfalls of community involvement, and the obstacles to establishing such services. Reflecting the conference discussions, the report also addresses broader issues such as the role of community-based services in stimulating social change and future policy directions in this area.

1986 75 pp $4.95

Food Banks and the Welfare Crisis
by Graham Riches

What are food banks, how do they operate, and why have they been established in so many communities across Canada? Why are they feeding hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens? **Food Banks and the Welfare Crisis** provides answers to these questions as well as a critical look at the operation of the public safety net in Canada. It documents the recent proliferation of emergency food services in Canada, and argues that food banks represent more than an upsurge of charity in tough times; they are the signposts of the collapse of the social safety net. While food banks receive corporate donations and government grants, corporate interests perpetuate a wasteful food marketing system and governments provide inadequate social assistance benefits. By showing such contradictions in social policy, Riches challenges head-on popular notions about hunger, poverty, and the adequacy of the welfare system.

1986 180 pp $12.95

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Second edition: 1987